

Elliott Abrams

I think he meant being able to conduct public affairs without the government or the police breathing down your neck, without getting arrested for going to a meeting or trying to create an opposition party or trying to write an article in a newspaper that says the president or the prime minister or whoever is a bum or a thief. I think he meant that sort of elementary no midnight knock at the door. He clearly meant free press and free elections. But I think freedom of association was very important to him too: the sense that you could organize a party or an opposition group, obviously completely peaceful, without going to jail for it. And he knew an awful lot of people; almost all the people we are talking about at one point or another were beaten up by the police or jailed either briefly or for long periods of time. Kim Dae-jung, for example, had been imprisoned for years and came close to being executed. He knew a lot of people like that, and so I think it was political rights but in the context of systems where the fight for your political rights could be a very dangerous thing, and he wanted to protect people from those dangers.